

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Friday, June 1, 2001
Jones & Stokes
2600 V Street
Sacramento, CA

Meeting Attendees: See Attachment A

Introductions

Watershed Work Group (Work Group) Co-Chair Robert Meacher began the meeting with introductions. A list of attendees (Attachment A) is included with this summary.

Watershed Program 2000/2001 Proposal Recommendations

John Lowrie (CALFED Watershed Program) led a discussion regarding the preliminary recommendations for the fiscal year 2000/2001 CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program) Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP). As previously decided by the Work Group, only the complete suite of projects was discussed; no individual projects were mentioned. The monies awarded to proposal applicants will come from the \$20 million provided to the Watershed Program from the state's General Fund. Mr. Lowrie explained that the proposal recommendations would be presented to the CALFED Management Group and Policy Group, and then forwarded to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for final approval. He added that a list of recommended proposals would be posted on the Watershed Program website by end of day, June 1, 2001. Mr. Lowrie then presented a series of slides detailing the PSP selection process and recommendations for funding.

Approach

In early 2000, Watershed Program staff and the Work Group established an Initial Implementation Strategy for the Watershed Program. The strategy identified the following purpose, objectives, and priorities for initial implementation of the Watershed Program.

The **purpose** of initial implementation of the Watershed Program is to demonstrate the value and contributions of watershed management using a community-based and locally led approach to achieving CALFED goals for the Bay-Delta system and broader solution area. The following **objectives** were identified to help achieve this purpose:

- Define and illustrate relationships between watershed processes and the primary goals and objectives of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED).
- Address 1 or more specific outcomes identified as a priority by CALFED during Stage 1 of the program.
- Demonstrate the value of watershed efforts to CALFED in geographically diverse locations within the solution area.

- Demonstrate the value of a community-based approach in addressing a diversity of issues, circumstances, and community characteristics found in different watersheds within the CALFED solution area.
- Further the long-term objectives of CALFED.

The following priorities were identified for initial implementation of the Watershed Program:

- building of local capacity to assess and effectively manage watersheds that affect the Bay-Delta system;
- development of watershed assessments and plans; and
- development of specific watershed conservation, maintenance, and restoration actions.

Proposal Solicitation and Selection Process

Mr. Lowrie then provided an overview of the proposals that were received during the second stage of the PSP process. The second stage of the PSP process refers to the full development of selected pre-proposals from the first stage. Of the 104 preproposals that were recommended for full development, 83 full proposals were received by CALFED. Those 83 full proposals requested a total of \$33,625,161 with a total match of \$18,663,024.

Criteria for the Full Package of Proposal Recommendations:

Mr. Lowrie reviewed the following criteria that were established to assess the entire package of proposal recommendations:

- Does the set of proposals represent a balance of diverse watershed activities that demonstrate potential to improve the Bay-Delta system?
- Does the set of proposals represent a variety of watershed settings such as forest, agricultural, urban, mixed, snow-based, or rainfall-based, etc.?
- Does the set of proposals represent a diverse geographic distribution?

Watershed Program Recommendations

Mr. Lowrie then provided an overview of the recommendations for the 2000/2001 PSP.

PSP Recommendations:

- Recommendation for full or partial funding for 55 of the 83 full proposals received, with a dollar amount totaling \$18,170,758.
- Create and hold a contingency account to meet funding needs associated with contract amendments and revisions, and to fund additional applications through the appeals process. Total amount of the contingency account = \$875,000.
- Provide DWR with 1.5% of the award amount to cover their contract administration costs. Total amount estimated for administrative costs = \$260,000.
- Total costs to fund and administer all recommended actions identified through the PSP = \$19,030,758.

Additional Recommendations (not tied directly to the PSP):

Mr. Lowrie explained that the following additional recommendations are designed to complement activities identified through the PSP. These additional recommendations include:

- Science Program support for peer review, monitoring, comprehensive performance measurement, project evaluations, and identifying relationships between watershed processes and benefits to the Bay-Delta system. Total amount = \$200,000.
- Financial support to ensure delivery of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Watershed Partnership Seminar in California this calendar year. Total amount = \$150,000.
- Financial support for community outreach/support including workshops, training sessions, and activities of the Work Group for the purpose of enhancing the relevance and fundability of projects and activities undertaken by the Watershed Program. Total amount = \$250,000.
- Funding for directed actions that would entail refining selected projects and activities identified in the PSP process. Total amount = \$500,000.

Questions and Comments

At the close of Mr. Lowrie's presentation, Watershed Work Group participants were invited to voice comments and ask questions about the Watershed Program's PSP recommendations and selection process.

One participant asked how the proposals were reviewed and selected. Mr. Lowrie stated that each proposal was reviewed by 2–3 members of a Technical Review Panel and a Selection Review Panel. The Technical Review Panel was given a set of criteria by which to assess proposals. Technical reviewers' comments were passed on to the Selection Panel for consideration.

Another participant noted that the Selection Panel originally recommended only 51 of the proposals for funding, and inquired about the 4 projects that were added after the Selection Panel made its recommendations. Mr. Lowrie stated that 1 of the additional 4 projects is a research project that was recommended for scientific peer review prior to making a funding decision. Should that project be recommended for funding, the monies must be available and earmarked for that purpose. Mr. Lowrie explained that the other 3 projects did not receive consensus from the Selection Panel; however, when they were re-reviewed, it became clear that there was no justifiable reason for denying funding.

Several participants offered suggestions for improving the Watershed Program's funding distribution process. One asserted that the recommended directed actions should be supported, as they are valuable for supporting watershed efforts. Another participant offered that if the research project that will receive scientific peer review is not approved for funding, the funds designated for that project should go back into the directed actions fund. It was suggested that the Watershed Program should have the flexibility to redistribute unused funds rather than return them to the General Fund. Another opinion was that excess funds should not be used to fund additional projects, but rather used to help applicants improve their proposals for the next Watershed Program PSP. One participant also requested that the demographics of applicants be evaluated to determine if the "haves" are getting more than the "have-nots." There was general agreement that the numerous watershed funding efforts should be coordinated.

Many participants had recommendations for improving future PSPs. One participant noted that increasing the proposal pool may not be desirable, as there is no benefit to receiving more applications only to reject them. Another participant indicated that the PSP's timing and planning should be more carefully considered for the next round of funding. It was suggested that applicants should receive training on CALFED documentation, as the CALFED EIS/EIR and appendices are complex and daunting. Other

meeting participants stated that the questions on the PSP application were overly academic and often redundant. One participant commented that the Watershed Program should be cautious about who identifies and/or determines the relationships between watershed processes and benefits to the Bay-Delta system. A recommendation was made to include a resource economist on the Review Panel to help identify these relationships between watershed processes and the Bay-Delta system.

Meeting participants also commented on outreach and community involvement. It was suggested that the community support process be the highest priority for remaining PSP funds. One participant recommended that outreach efforts be increased to solicit more proposals and increase the quality of proposals, and that these efforts include venues for successful proposal applicants to provide peer education and train new applicants. One participant indicated that the “bottom-up” approach to issues relies on local capacity and that the Watershed Program should help increase collaboration.

Dennis Bowker (Watershed Program) described the Watershed Partnerships Seminar, which emphasizes partnership-building and collaboration. One meeting participant recommended that an additional watershed seminar be offered in the spring to satisfy increased interest. Another participant suggested that the cost of the watershed seminar could be reduced to \$35,000 by arranging for free room and board via an in-kind donation. Mr. Bowker suggested that the fall seminar class size remain at 40–50 participants.. The process for selecting seminar participants will be developed by the Watershed Program staff and the Work Group.

Local Watershed Presentation: Otis Wollan—American River Watershed

Otis Wollan (American River Watershed Institute) gave a presentation on the American River Watershed. His presentation provided an overview of the watershed, its linkages to CALFED, and information on the American River Watershed Group (ARWG) and American River Watershed Institute (ARWI).

Mr. Wollan explained that the American River Watershed stretches from Tahoe to Sacramento and includes the North, Middle and South forks (1,000,000 total acres). American River priority issues include fuel-loading and prevention of catastrophic wildfire and watershed devastation. The problem source includes poor forest management practices such as high grading selective cutting, extensive clear cuts, and even-age monoculture; fire suppression rather than fire management; a decline in grazing; and a lack of thinning and management leading to dense, even-age canopy in crowded stand with understory thicket prone to fire. Fuel-loading/catastrophic fire can affect water quality, storage, supply, and re-operation.

The ARWG is a voluntary association based on a commitment to the common interests expressed by the goals and objectives stated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU has numerous stakeholder signatories. ARWG objectives include the following:

- Develop a watershed approach to fuels reduction and fuel management.
- Provide interagency support to agencies and private landowners desiring to reduce fuel load and make resource improvements.
- Develop demonstration sites and hold workshops for public education and awareness.
- Reduce risk of catastrophic fire.
- Enhance watershed and habitat values and rehabilitate the forest ecosystem.
- Identify desired future watershed conditions.
- Manage and improve water quality.

- Reduce the risk of erosion and sedimentation and employ a long-term, interdisciplinary monitoring system.
- Protect human lives and improved property.
- Sustain long-term economic viability.

The ARWI is a nonprofit corporation associated with the ARWG, which serves as its Advisory Board. ARWG members are selected and serve on the ARWI Board. ARWI has applied for IRS 501 (c)(3) tax exempt, tax deductible status as a nonprofit with an educational and scientific purpose. ARWI objectives and purposes include the following:

- To support and enhance the research and educational work of ARWG and its Coordinated Resources Management Programs (CRMP) activities;
- To conduct public discussion groups, forums, panels, lectures, workshops, design charrettes, and conferences to produce demonstration projects and public interest educational materials, including, but not limited to, newsletters, pamphlets, books, radio, TV, recorded audio and video, electronic media, etc.; and
- To complement and enhance the educational and research opportunities for both adults and children about watershed issues and, as necessary, to provide and maintain facilities for education and research in, but not limited to, the ecosystem of the American River Watershed, and its forest systems, biology, hydrology, natural systems, and the socioeconomic human systems in the watershed, as well as the areas having impact on the American River Watershed.

ARWI has received numerous grants from several sources, totaling more than \$2 million. A comprehensive list of funding sources was presented.

For additional information, please contact Otis Wollan at American River Watershed Group (ARWG); (otis@foothill.net); 530/346-7967; ARWG c/o Placer Co RCD, 251 Auburn Ravine Rd., Suite 201, Auburn, CA 95603.

Watershed Updates

Assembly Bill 2117

Ken Coulter provided an update on Assembly Bill (AB) 2117. He explained that the Secretary of Natural Resources has approved 10 pilot watersheds. These watersheds will be included in the AB 2117 report that assesses the efficacy of different watershed programs.

Watershed Program MOU

Mr. Lowrie gave a status report on the Watershed Program MOU. He stated that the document has received additional minor changes from agency representatives. The MOU has been provisionally approved by the CALFED Management Group and is very close to being circulated for agency signature.

Next Work Group Meeting

The next Work Group meeting is scheduled for July 20 at: Jones & Stokes
2600 V St.
Sacramento, CA

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
Ames, Laurel	Sierra Nevada Alliance
Anderson, Michael	U.C. Davis
Barris, Lynn	Sacramento River Watershed Program
Bowker, Dennis	Sacramento River Watershed Program/CALFED
Bradt, Josh	Urban Creeks Council
Buzzard, Diane	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Cantrell, Scott	CA Department of Fish and Game
Carter, K.	CSU Chico
Cornelius, James	Calaveras County Water District
Coulter, Ken	State Water Resources Control Board
Crooks, Bill	City of Sacramento
Dale, Richard	Sonoma Ecology Center
Danielson, Gary W.	Sierra Land Use Group; Confine the Mine, Inc.
Drake, Nettie	Panoche/Silver Creek CRMP
DuBois, Bill	CA Farm Bureau Federation
Elias, Chris	Santa Clara Valley Water District
Everts, Conner	Urban Creeks Council, SCWA
Fox, Dennis	OSCC
Giacomini, Pam	CA Farm Bureau Federation
Harter, Rick	Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council
Hindman, Nick	Western Area Power Administration
Hoyos, Renee	CA Resources Agency
Jacobs, Selene	Jones & Stokes
Jerauld, Frank	Amador Resource Conservation District
Keller, Mary	Sutter County
Knecht, Mary Lee	Jones & Stokes
Lavelle, Jane	City and County of San Francisco
Leininger, Chris	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Lipsey, John J.	Tetra Tech, Inc.
Lowrie, John	CALFED Watershed Program
Meacher, Robert	Plumas County
O-Bryant, Dennis	CA Department of Conservation
Ramirez, Tim	CA Resources Agency
Reed, Rhonda	CA Department of Fish and Game, Fresno
Reeve, Matt	CA Department of Food and Agriculture
Riley, Laurie	Bitterroot Restoration, Inc.
Robins, Paul	Yolo County Resource Conservation District
Schmitt, Gary	U.S. Forest Service
Shilling, Fraser	U.C. Davis
Shull, Lee	New Fields
Sime, Fraser	CA Department of Water Resources
Smith, Lynda	Metropolitan Water District
Smythe, Tom	Lake County Department of Public Works
Sullivan, Marie	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Swearingen, Vieve	Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group
Toor, Surjit	Natural Resources Conservation District
Tribbey, Joyce	ESA
Troyan, Jerry	Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District
Vargas, Al	CA Department of Food and Agriculture
Ward, Kevin	U.C. Davis Information Center for the Environment
Watson, Chuck	WRC-Environmental
Wessman, George	Wessman Industries
Wemiel, Dan	CALFED
Wheeler, Gil	Larry Walker Associates
Yost, Larry	Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture
Zhang, Minghua	U.C. Davis
Ziegler, Sam	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

